THE MINISTER OF WELFARE (SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOOWALIA): (a) to (b) The required information as supplied by Ministry of Labour is given in the enclosed statement. (*see* below).

(c) Statement showing the steps taken to provide gainful employment to handicapped persons in the country including Bihar is given in the Statement.

Statement-I

Setting up of vocational rehabilitation centres for handicapped persons in Bihar

A Vocational rehabilitation Centre for Handicapped (VRC) has already been functioning at Patna. The last three years performance of this Centre is as follows:—

	1993	1994	1995
Intake	684	821	755
Evaluated	687	763	410
Rehabilitated	82	85	79

There is no proposal to set up a second VRC at present in Bihar.

Statement-II

Setting up of Vocational Rehabilitation Centres for Handicapped persons in Bihar

(i) In terms of Section 33 of the Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995, every appropriate Government shall appoint in every establishment such per centage of vacancies not less than three percent for persons of class of persons with disability of which one per cent each shall be reserved for persons suffering from—(i) blindness of low vision; (ii) hearing impairment; (iii) locomotor disability or cerebral palsy, in the posts identified for each disability. Even before the Act came into force, 3 per cent vacancies have been reserved for physically handicapped, 1 per cent each for the physical, hearing and orthopaedically handicapped in Group C & D posts in Central Government and Public Sector Undertakings. Similar reservations have been given by some State Govts. Apart from this, age concession and relaxation in medical standards are also available to handicapped candidates.

(ii) 41 Special Employment Exchanges and 47 Special Cells for the handicapped persons have been set up exclusively to help the handicapped in getting gainful employment. Besides, the Normal Employment Exchange also help the handicapped person in finding suitable employment.

(iii) Seventeen Vocational Rehabilitation Centres have been set up to assess the residual ability of the disabled, arrange their training and place them in employment.

(iv) Self-employment is promoted through the following:—

(a) Allotment of vending stalls, kiosks and petty shops;

(b) Loans from Nationalised Banks at nominal rates of interest under differential Rate of Interest Scheme;

(c) Allotment of public telephone booths;

(d) Reservation in distribution of petrol pumps, kerosene depots etc.

Proposal to set up a National Sugar Pricing Board

2454. SHRI SATISH AGARWAL: Will the Minister of FOOD be pleased to refer to his observations made at the Economic Ministers' Conference held on 6th November, 1996 and state:

(a) whether Government are considering any proposal to set up a National Sugar Pricing Board to iron out anomalies between the Centre and State prices offered for sugarcane;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) by when legislation is likely to be brought forward to give effect to this?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV): (a) to (c) The Central Govt. had convened a Conference of Sugar Ministers of all sugar producing States/UTs on 5.2.94. In that Conference, a Committee of Sugar Ministers of five State Govts. viz. Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra and Karnataka was constituted to recommend the Pricing Policy of Sugarcane. The Committee submitted its Report on 3.4.95. Another Conference of sugar Ministers of all the sugar producing States/UTs. was convened on 6.5.95 to conider the recommendations of that Committee. Though majority of the States/UTs. supported the formation of National Pricing Board for 'Sugarcane', there was difference of opinioin about its terms of reference. The Govt. decided to seek detailed views/suggestions from the State/UTs. in this regard. Views of Government of Maharashtra are awaited.

Autonomy to Development Commissioner for Iron and Steel

2455. SHRI SATISH PRADHAN: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering grant of greater autonomy in the liberalised regime to Development Commissioner for Iron and Steel to make it an effective development body;

(b) if so, the details of the changes under consideration/finalised and present status of the proposal; and

(c) the main functions presently assigned to DCIS and details of functions proposed to be assigned?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA): (a) to (c) The functions assigned to Development Commissioner for Iron and Steel (DCI&S) can be categorised as advisory, development and regulatory functions. The main functions are as follows:—

(a) Collection, processing and dissemination of basic information relating to the Iron and Steel industry and to act as the data bank of the Ministry of Steel.

(b) Monitoring of regional price and supply trends and suggesting to the Ministry remedial measures for correcting the imbalances, if any.

(c) Monitoring of import and export of iron and steel materials.

(d) Advice on matters relating to import and export policies of iron and steel.

(e) Management of distribution of iron and steel materials to the newly designated priority sectors such as Defence, Railways, State Small Industries Corporations, Engineering Goods Exporters and the North Eastern States.

(f) Allocation of materials to the State Small Scale Industries Corporations.

(g) Allocation of materials to remote areas like North Eastern States.

(h) Assistance to Engineering Goods Export Units through priority allocations and monitoring thereof.

(i) Survey of various segments of Steel Industry.

(j) Rendering assistance to the EAF units and the secondary sector, by way of capacity assessment, assistance in procurement of indigenous/imported raw material and import substitution measures aimed at overall develop development of the sector.

(k) Interface between the Government and different consumer groups to facilitate consumer-producer interaction.

(l) Co-ordination for movement of raw materials to Steel Plants.